Socialist Worker

DUBLIN BUS:
Stand up to Mangan's threats! No attacks on pay and conditions!

DUBLIN BUS management are trying to whip up hysteria in order to justify attacks on busworkers pay and conditions. In a letter that Chief Executive, Donal Mangan, sent to every worker, he claimed the company was practically bankrupt and needs to save £8 million. Needless to say Mangan expects workers to pay the cost of any savings.

Management have made clear what they want:

■*CONTRACTING OUT OF SCHOOL ROUTES:* They say these are too costly and should be hived off to private hackers. But if we allow any work to be contracted out on the basis that it loses money, there is no telling where it might end.

What bus route makes money in the evening, or off-peak hours ? We should reject totally the logic behind the bosses argument. Public transport is a social service.

■*REDUCING THE AMOUNT OF OVERTIME WORKED AND THE RATE OF PAY FOR OVERTIME:* Many workers are compelled to work overtime just to meet commitments such as mortgages. It seems Dublin Bus have taken a leaf out of Dunnes Stores book by trying to reduce the rate of pay for overtime.

If they want to eliminate overtime we should be demanding a decent pay rise instead of the miserly increases we have received over the last number of years.

■*HIRING PART-TIME/SEASONAL WORKERS ON REDUCED RATES OF PAY:* Any increase in jobs is welcome but we must ensure that new workers enjoy the same conditions and rights that we have.

Already mini-bus drivers receive much less than double-deck drivers. If Dublin Bus has its way, new workers will be even worse off. This will simply divide us all. What good is a part-time job with no security of hours or pay.

■*REDUCTION IN ABSENTEEISM:* This is a laugh. If management were serious they would have introduced the auto fare right across the city years ago. That alone would

have massively reduced the number of workers going sick due to assaults.

■*ELIMINATING T.P.O. JOBS:* Again they argue T.P.O. staff cost too much. Workers who have given years of service are to be discarded. In reality, if we accept their argument on T.P.O. staff who will be next ?

Marked-in staff ? Bogie staff ? T.P.O. jobs should be defended by all staff for as long as they wish to remain.

Among the justifications used for these attacks are new E.U. laws which mean that Dublin Bus could face competition from private run companies. Busworkers should not be fooled by this.

The financial position of Dublin Bus is not nearly as bad as they claim. This year CIE increased the cost of 'depreciation' (i.e. wear and tear on the buses) in their accounts. Was this to make the figures look worse ?

Last year the Government gave just £2 million in state subsidy to the company. This is scandalous. Dermot Gleeson, who represented Larry Goodman at the beef tribunal will get almost £1 million in legal fees paid for by P.A.Y.E. workers like us.

They have used similar justifications for attacking semi-state workers in Telecom, Aer Lingus and ESB.

If they want us to "come into line" with Europe, we should be demanding the same conditions as a French or a German busworker. In France for example public sector workers get five weeks statutory holidays each year and they are entitled to early retirement at just over 50 years of age.

Behind all the talk of "competition and the free market" is the old bosses agenda of "making the workers pay".

We should be telling this company loud and clear that we will accept no attacks on our pay and conditions.

Dublin Bus would love to see our conditions driven down to the level of those employed by private operators. But their plans can be stopped in their tracks.

Workers in Bus Eireann and Irish Rail are facing similar attacks. If we stand united we can win.

Public transport is a social service, it should not be dependent on the free market to see if someone can make a profit from it.

If this Government can spend over £200 million on bailing out Goodman, it can certainly invest properly in the country's public transport.

French public transport workers have shown the way to beat the attacks on their jobs and conditions - the fantastic strikes led by transport workers in France last December forced their Government to back off.

We can win.

Join the Socialist Workers Party!

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